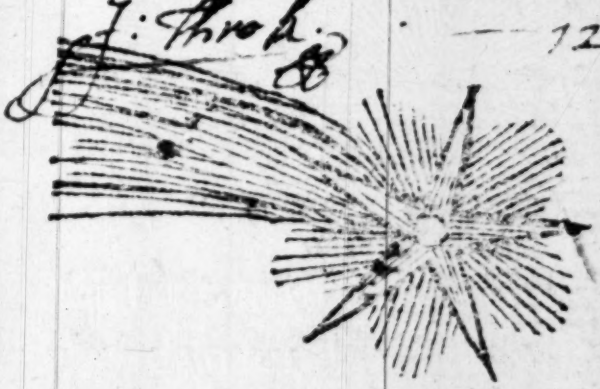
Of all blasing starrs in generall, as well supernaturall as naturall, to what countrie or people so euer they appeare in the world vniuersall.

¶ The iudgement of the right reuerend Frederike Nause, Bishop of Vienna.

‡ Written and dedicated to the most high and puissaunt Emperour Ferdinand.

¶ Translated out of Latine into English, by *Abraham Fleming*.



¶ Imprinted at London for Thomas *Woodcocke*. 1577.

WH. p. 1106.

To the Right worſhipfull, and my ſingular good Patrone, Sir William Cordell Knight, Maiſter of her Maieſties Rolles, increaſe and continuance of health, wealth, and worſhip.

REmembrance of vndeſerued fauour, (Right worſhipfull) is a preſent ſpurre vnto me to continue deſerued dutie: in conſideration whereof, not knowing otherwiſe to ſeale an aſſuraunce of my thankful ſeruice, I haue (after my maner) employed my pen in tranſlating a pamphlet, though breefe and compendious, yet pithie and profitable: whiche with wonted will I dedicate to your worſhip, in hope of accuſtomed courteous acceptation. Prudent and learned was he, by whome it was compiled: puiſſaunt and mightie, to whom it was preſented: preſumptuous and vnskilfull, by whome it is tranſlated: politike & graue, to whom it is exhibited. The firſt was a Biſhop of great reuerence, the ſecond an Emperour

of ſpeciall renowne, the thirde an abiect of no reputation, & the fourth a Knight of good worſhip and countenaunce. Into whoſe ſacred handes though this my trauell deſerue not interteinment, in reſpect of mine owne perſon being the interpreter: yet the name of the Preacher by whome it was written, and the fame of the Gouernour to whome it was giuen, ſhall bring to my labour (I truſt) ſuche countenaunce, as it ſhall of your worſhip be fauourably receiued, and of euery indifferent reader religiouſly reuerenced. The moſt mightie God and gouernour of all thinges, the euerlaſting King who hath power ouer life & death, and in whoſe treaſurie are repoſed all good graces for the comfort and benefit of his elect, inrich your worſhip with all maner bleſsings both corporal and mentall, that when the dayes of your pilgrimage are expired, you and yours may be receiued into Abrahams boſom, the happie harborough for all Gods choſen children. Amen.

Your worſhips by dutie bound,
Abraham Fleming.

To the Christian reader.

THis generall doctrine (Christian reader) published vpon a speciall cause, namely, the appearing of a blasing starre at Mentz in Germanie 1531. when I had perused & pondered according to the mesure of mine vnderstanding and knowledge, I thought needful for the time to translate, and to commit to the present viewe of the world. Wherein, as there is nothing preiudicially spoken, which might kindle occasion of displeasure: so is nothing therein taught and discouered, but hath his groundworke of truth and veritie, (coniectures excepted, whiche, for their vncerteintie and fallibleneſſe, are accordingly to be considered,) and therefore the more notable.

Farewell.

Thine to vse
Abraham Fleming.

The summe or contents of this whole booke.

WHy and whereupon blasing starres haue their name. Chapter. 1.

That blasing starres are sundry and diuers. 2

In what part of Heauen blasing starres appeare most commonly, 3

At what time of the yere blasing starres appeare, and how long they continue. 4

Whereof blasing starres be ingendered, (according to the iudgement of Diuines) and what they are indeede. 5

Whereof blasing starres ingender, (according to the rules of Philosophers, and the canons of Astronomers,) and what they are indeed. 6

Whether the starre which conducted the wisemen, to the place where Christe was borne, were the blasing starre wherof the Emperour Augustus did speake, calling it by the name of a starre. 7

Whether blasing starres preport and foreshewe some straunge and wonderfull thing to followe. 8

The good and euill whiche blasing starres doe prognosticate and betoken. 9

The mischiefes which blasing starres forewarne to insue. 10

Sundrie examples and testimonies declaring the diuers and manifolde mischiefes which haue followed the appearing of blasing starres. 11

Whether blasing starres do not as well betoken good, as yll. 12

To

To what countries, and to what persons blasing starres doe principally betoken yll. 13
Howe and what way blasing starres are forewarnings of somewhat to come, and of force so to doe. 14
Why blasing starres doe specially betoken yll to Peeres, Potentates, Rulers of realmes and Common wealthes. 15
Of a certeine blasing starre, which appeared in the yeare of our Lorde. 1531. the 19. of September, at Mentz a citie in Germanie, and was sensibly seene likewise in other places. 16
Whether such euilles as blasing starres betoken, may by any meanes, either be preuented or auoyded. 17

A Prognoſtication of blaſing ſtarres, after the opinion of the Poet Pontanus, and thus metrically Engliſhed.

OF whiſking windes, with bluſtering blaſts which blowe:
Of bloudie broyles, by force in fatall fight:
Of peoples pompe, the pittious ouerthrowe:
Of Potentates the death (ah helliſh ſpight:)
The blaſing ſtarres aloft like lampes of light
In th'Eaſt or Weſt of azure coloured ſkies,
Fore warnings are and ſignes when they arriſe.

If ſtill they ſtand, and offer not to chaunge
The place, where firſt in ſight they caſt their beames,
Then ſhall inſue much miſchiefe rare and ſtraunge:
As gaping woundes, yſpowting bloudie ſtreames,
In foughten fielde, twixt nigh adioyning realmes.
Such ciuil ſtormes ſhall ouerrunne the land,
That ſome ſhall bath in kinreds bloud their hand.

And if they take their courſe vnto the Eaſt,
A ſigne it is that forreigne foes with force
Prepare apace, to ſpoyle both moſt and leaſt:
With edge of ſworde ſweete life (ah) to diuorce
From panting heart, ſaunce ſpirite of remorſe.
Thus Eaſt or Weſt in ſight, they haue their dome,
And ſignes they are of things in time to come.

Ab. Fleming.

Why, and whereupon Blasing Starres haue their names.

Chapter. 1.

Forsomuche as a man furnished with all kind of knowledge and learning, should so searche after ỹ vnderstanding of loftie and high matters, that he haue not meaner things in contempt and disdaine, by whose benefit (as experience teacheth) the greater are atteined, because they minister certeine helpes and aydes to aspire and reache vnto them: Wherevpon it followeth, that lesser thinges are not to bee neglected, without the which there is no passage to the greater, nor any possibilitie to pearce to the perfect præfe of them, excepte by the forerunning of these, preparation be made for vs to ascende & climbe vp to the hidden know-

ledge of the other: therefore, lest this our labour lent and laide out for common vtilitie and profite, should be subiect to the battering blowes of furious enuie, and lest such as desire perfection in profession, and certeintie in deliuering doctrine, should complaine, that we sell shadowes for substaunces, phantasies for verities, and imaginations for demonstrations, we will say somewhat, in the entraunce of this woorke, touching the name of a Comete or Blasing starre, and so passe orderly to our purpose.

A Blasing star is named after the forme & figure whiche it beareth.

The starre which the Grecians call Cometes, the Latines Stella crinita, we Englishmen a Blasing starre, hath his denomination, (as well by the assertion of the one, as the other) from the forme and figure which it beareth, at such time as it appeareth in the Aire: bycause this kinde of starre seemeth (in our opinion and iudgement) to shote out long strakes of fire in the element, or bright and lightsome sparckles continued in length, like vnto haire, which the Græcians call Coma, & thereupon Cometa,

Cometa, & the Latines Crinis, whereof it is named Stella crinita: so that the resemblaunce or representation which this starre giueth, is the occasion that it is called a Comet or Blasing starre. As Augustus Cęsar called that starre which appeared at such time as he published pageants of pleasure, and shewes of triumph, by the name of a Comete: and which Suetonius Tranquillus called Sidus crinitum, and diuers others haue semblably termed.

Neyther was the imposition of this name absurde, or against reason: for whosoeuer shall narrowly behold these kinde of starres, hee shall perceiue, (though not most perfectly, yet not verie darkely) howe it spitteth out long & slender lines of sparckling fire this way and that way: in so muche as a man would thinke and suppose the same not vnlike vnto scattered haire, to a brome or a rodde of Bryche, to the taile of a Pecocke, to the beарde of a man, &c. as we are taught by demonstration.

The likenesses of Blasing starres, as som times they appeare.

That

Of Blasing starres

That Blasing starres are sundrie and diuerse.

Chap. 2.

BLasing starres are not onely verie manie in number, but also diuerse in appearance. The sect of the Stoikes saide, that they are beyonde two & thirtie, of whose sundrie names and seuerall effectes Abienus (not vnwisely) hath written.

Concerning their number & names we are not curious, wherefore we will come to their colours and likenesses, wherein there is not a vniformitie and generall agrément, but a difference. For some Blasing starres séeme bloud red, horrible to beholde, and as it were crisped and curled in the crowne, or vpper parte tending towardes the skies, wherevppon they are commonly called Cometes: of which the Poet hath this saying.

Blasing starres differ in colour.

Like as in moyst and dewishe night,
When Comets red as blood

Appeare

Appeare aloft: a ſpectacle and ſigne of little good.

This figure haue they, when they are thicke on the one ſide, and ſtretched out in length on the other ſide. Blaſing ſtarres varie in figure

Some Blaſing ſtarres there bée, which haue a traine hanging downewarde at their lower parte, in the likeneſſe of a long bearde, or the maine of a horſe: which happeneth by reaſon of the thinne matter and ſubſtance which is in the other partes, which kinde of ſtarres are called Pogonii.

Otherſome there are, which appeare in the likeneſſe of a Speare or Iauelin, and they are called Acontii: of ſuche a one (as teſtifieth Plinie) did Tiberius Cęſar in his fift Conſulſhip, penne paſſing and excellent Poemes, or verſes of notable inuention and ſingular conueyaunce.

Other ſome there are, ſhorter ſomewhat then ẏ former, & they be ſharpe towards the top like a ſword, whereupon they are called Piphii, reſembling in colour Golde after a ſorte, but yet ſo not-

notwithstanding, that of all other they are moste pale, wanting beames, blasses, or strakes, hauing neuertheless a certeine brightnesse in them, like the glittering of a swoorde.

Other some there are which are called Phitites, in forme and fashion like a tunne, hauing in the hollowe parte of it the shewe of a smoakie and smothering flame, much like vnto the blacke Smithes forge, or vessels daubed and smeared with pitche sett on fire, which cast a darke & mistie light, which men haue sometimes vsed for the preseruing and freshe keeping of their drinke.

There are besides them that wee haue reckoned, Comets called Ceratii, because they appeare to our sight in the similitude and likenesse of a horne: such a one was seene when the Grecians incamped at Salamis.

Othersome also are there, which be called Lampades, because they cast a shewe of a burning torche, or flaming lampe, of which sort sundrie haue beene seene, and that not verie seldome.

Furthermore, some there are which be

be called Hippei, because they seeme to haue about them, as it were, a horse maine, going round about them in circle wise, with straunge mouing and swiftnesse.

To be short, some blasing starres are seene in the Aire, glistering with strakes and streames like bright siluer, that it passeth the abilitie of mans eye to loke and beholde them, wherein (as in a cleere glasse) God is representeed in the likenesse and shape of a man: and such a one (as some doe holde opinion) was that which appeared to the wise men in the East, and conducted them to the place where Christe was borne: concerning the appearing wherof, thus said they to the Hierosolomites: For we haue seene his starre in the East, and are come to do him worship.

A blasing starre representing (as it were in a glasse) the image of God

But touching this, we purpose (peraduenture) to say somwhat in the winding vp of this worke. We knowe, that besides these which we haue rehearsed, there be many more formes & figures of Cometes or Blasing starres, & many more sortes, of which particularly

to

to discourse is not our meaning or intent, nor yet a matter of such weight & importance, that it should require present & perfecte handling: We will passe therefore to that which is more necessarie.

In what parte of heauen Blasing starres appeare moste commonly.

Chap. 3.

In what parte of heauen Blasing starres are seene.

THey that haue written things notable and profitable of Astrologie, and haue discouered things concerning the influencies & gouernements of starres, in such sort & order that the knowledge issuing from their traueyles offereth fruite not deseruing repentaunce, they (I saye) haue affirmed, that Blasing starres neuer appeare in the West part of heauen: but eyther vnder the North, in some one parte or other, but vncerteine: howbeit most commonly in that bright and cleare parte, which is called the milkie circle: or else (which is seldome

dome ſeene come to paſſe) they appeare in the South pole, but yet without any blaſe, in the ſeaſons of Winter eſpecially. Yet is it recorded, that a Comet appeared to the Aethiopians, and to the Aegyptians, and that the King of thoſe people gaue that Blaſing ſtarre a name, calling it Typon, becauſe it had in it a double reſemblance, namely of a round ball, and of a fire, in ſo much that, according to ỹ iudgement of ſenſe, it might not ſo aptly be called a Comet or Blaſing ſtarre, as a fierie or flameing ball, or a round compaſſed and burning knott.

At what time of the yere Blaſing ſtarres appeare, and howe long they continue.

Chap. 4.

ALthough Damaſcene (an author in my iudgement worthie reuerence) is of opinion that a Blaſing ſtarre is a ſtarre newly made and created for the time preſent, which vaniſheth out of

sight, and ceaseth to appeare, when the thing whereof it is a signification is accomplished and come to passe: yet notwithstanding, experience (whome writers name, the maistresse of manie mysteries) informeth and teacheth vs, that a Blasing starre may appeare at any season of the yeare: but more often in Summer: and then specially, when the starre called Canicula ariseth and ruleth the weather & time of the yeare, according to the proportion of his influence: and that they continue seuen dayes at the least, and not aboue foure score at the most, the authoritie of Plinie giuing countenaunce to this opinion.

The continuaunce of Blasing starres in their appearing.

Howbeeit, this assertion, together with the testimonie of Plinie, may be improued by examples: for (as it is vniuersally knowen) a Comete, which appeared before the ouerthrowe of Hierusalem, was seene blasing in the element, to the wonderfull astonishment of the people, by the space of a whole yeare: as Eusebius and Iosephus verified.

But

A doctrine generall.

But we must note, that this Comet, & the appearauuce of the same, which was full of horrour, is not to be ascribed vnto Nature, but to be attributed immediately vnto God, the father and founder of Nature: although the secte of the Pythagorists thought, that all Blasing starres were to bee referred vnto Nature, who hath prouided that their appearing should bee at certeine definite and appointed times of the yeare.

Touching these Blasing starres also, of the same sect there were some, who supposed that they were perpetuall starres, and not temporall, and that they had an ordinarie course to runne, as other starres haue their reuolution and circular motion, and that their appearing proceéded from none other cause, then when they were forsaken and lefte of the Sunne, whose brightnesse and nérenesse is the occasion (as they thinke) that Blasing starres do not appeare.

The opinion of the Pythagoristes touching Blasing starres.

Of Blasing starres

Whereof Blasing starres be ingendered (according to the iudgement of Diuines) and what they are in deede.

Chap. 5.

THE religious Diuines like verie well of this plausible and true opinion, that Blasing starres come of no other cause, then from the counsell and prouidence of God: that there is no matter of their generation as Philosophers imagine, but that God maketh them immediate messengers and ministers of his will, according to the time and place, as it best pleaseth his high & eternall maiestie: that by them hée might giue vs aduertisements of afterclappes, to prepare our selues onward to méete his fatherly mercie, or to suffer the bytternesse of his sharpe iudgement: whereuppon they inferre this consequent, that Blasing starres are supernaturall, and méere worlds wonders.

To whose sentence I agrée, & most willingly

willingly assent, being thereto moued by arguments of forceable persuasion, and in number infinite. Principally, because it is a Christians dutie to ascribe more to Gods prouidence, then to the force of Nature, whome God hath not onely created, but also doth dispose and gouerne. Yet for all that, I may not vtterly denie, that they are naturall, for so much as I am not (or at least ought not to be) ignorant, that Nature causeth Blasing starres, howbeit so, that God is the originall and principall worker of such wonders, and that their groundes and causes are naturall, and not so secreat and doubtfull, but that otherwhile the capacitie and reason of man may conceiue and compasse them. And yet contrariwise, I stande not in deniall, that those Blasing starres are supernaturall, which the most mightie Monarche of the heauens, Creator of all creatures, and Maker of all starres & spirites, rayseth of nothing to something, vppon a soudeine, in a moment and pricke of time, to the admiration of all men, and to the reuealing of his

Some Blasing starres naturall, othersome supernaturall.

omnipotencie.

All things are possible to God.

Expedient and necessarie it is to beleeue, that with God all things are in ability, and that whatsoeuer is done eyther by daye or by night, naturally, or supernaturally, it commeth to passe by his appointment, and that it pleaseth him otherwhiles to create something of something, and otherwhiles againe something of nothing: to that which neuer had matter, can he giue fashion and figure: and beautifie that with forme and comelinesse, which neuer had foundation or being. It consisteth in his might to moysten ỹ earth with shoures distilling from the cleare skies, without the meanes of lowring & dropping cloudes. Ye can worke both wayes, to whome nothing is impossible, nowe gathering the cloudes together in an heape, from the vttermost corners and coastes of the worlde, now turning lightening into raine, now couering the heauens with cloudes, and preparing raine for ỹ land: For, Great is the Lorde, mightie is his power, and of his wisedome there is no number or ende

end: and therefore I am easily drawne to beleeue, that Blasing starres may appeare immediately from God, and be supernatural, when it pleaseth God vpon some singular cause to giue them beginning, matter, and substaunce of nothing.

Such a Blasing starre (no doubte) was that Piller of the cloude, whereby the Lorde in olde time moste miraculously went before the Israelites his people out of the Aegyptian soile, into the lande of promise in the day time: and that Piller of fire whiche neuer lefte the face of Gods chosen people in the night.

The piller of the cloude, & the piller of fire were Blasing starres supernaturall.

Not vnlike to this, was that Blasing starre (as I suppose) which threatning destruction to Hierusalem, was of no lesse continuaunce then terrour, indaring the space of a whole yeare, which is not proper to naturall Blasing starres.

The Blasing starre which appeared in Hierusalem was supernaturall.

To conclude, as well Diuines, as Philosophers & Astronomers, affirme thus muche in this case, that alwayes

in a maner) Blasing starres spring of causes naturall, albeit the Lord God is the principall author and worker of them, as in the Chapter following it is euident.

Whereof Blasing starres ingender, according to the rules of Philosophers, and the Canons of Astronomers, and what they are in deede.

Chap. 6.

CONcerning Blasing starres, I finde some disagrement betweene Philosophers and Astronomers. Anaxagoras and Democritus saide, that a Blasing starre was nothing else, but a certeine bright shining in the element, procured by the coniunction of two starres: to the which opinion I my selfe of late did somewhat incline and leane.

Other some also there were, whiche supposed a Blasing starre to bee but a certeine dimme and darke light compassed, and (as it were) closed vp in a cloude.

cloud. Other some saide, that it was a cloude purged and clarified from all earthly matter and grossenesse, whiche receiuing light from the other starres, casteth abroade cleare strakes of brightnesse, small and slender like haire or fine wrought flare.

Othersome againe, thought a Blasing starre to be but a certeine cloude, kindled and set on fire with a hotte flaming cleareneſſe, whose opinion Aristotle seemeth to haue fauoured, who supposed that a Blasing starre did consist of a drie vapour, which being drawen vpwarde into the highest Aire, is there set on fire: and that this Blasing starre taketh substance of earthly exhalations, verie hott, drie, fatt, and clammie, which being carried into the vpper region of the Aire, is there kindled and burneth. To whome all Philosophers (in a manner) of this our age, haue subscribed, & some Astronomers also, who with Aristotle think no lesse, then a Blasing starre to bee but an earthly vapour, somewhat thicke, fast, & fatt in substaunce, like oyle or birde-

Aristotle his opinion of Blasing starrs, and their generation.

lume, which being drawne vpwarde, nigh to the Sphere of the firie element, and touching the hollownesse of the orbe or circle, is there by heat rarified, made thinne and sett in a flame. So that by ỹ consent & mutuall agrément of these two sects, (although some do varie) it is concluded, that a Blasing starr is ingendred & made of aire set on fire, by reason of the nérenesse of ỹ element of fire, that aire conteining in it ỹ matter & stuffe of a Blasing starre, & that ỹ aire next adioyning, & being by the element of fire, is called a Blasing starre, & is no lesse in dæde then it is named: Which representeth the colour of fire to our eyes, because the drie vapour in it is kindeled, burneth, & lasteth with the light of the flame, which is moued to & fro by the vnder aire, where vapours of like nature, qualitie & substaunce arising, giue continuance & length thereunto, whereby it purchaseth the name, after which it is vsually called.

Vppon this agrée our late Philosophers, in a manner all, counting the doctrine of Aristotle woorthie credite &

sub-

ſubſcription: although as well the ſect Stoicall varie therefro, affirminge Blaſing ſtarres to bee but ordinarie ſtarres, not differing from other ſtarres which appeare in the aire, & to bee aboue thirtie and two in number: as alſo they, which holde this for a veritie, Blaſing ſtarres to bee perpetuall ſtarres, and to kæpe a limitted courſe or compaſſe, but never to blaſe and gliſter in the Aire, ſaue when they are lefte and forſaken of the Sunne, whoſe cleareneſſe dimmeth and dampeth vpp their brightneſſe, that it can neyther appeare nor be perceiued: and they in like ſort, which leane to this opinion, ỹ Blaſing ſtarres, be ſtarres, hauing their certeine appointed times of apperance.

The opinion of the Stoiks touching Blaſing ſtarres.

Now, as I diſſent not from the firſt, thoſe I meane, whoſe opinion draweth nærеſt to reaſon and trueth: ſo I varie not altogether from them, who holde opinion that a Blaſing ſtarre may be ſupernaturall, and alſo naturall, & that the ſame taketh generation of a fatt humour, and of fierie force, whereby it is diſſolued, and at the length conſumeth.

Where-

Whereuppon this consequent is to be inferred, that we cannot call a Blasing starre, properly a starre: but catachrestically, as we may so terme them, I meane, using in our phrase of speach a certeine abuse: although Augustus Cæsar (whereof we haue giuen a caueat in the beginning of this our treatise) called that Blasing starre which appeared at such time as he published his pageantes of triumph, by the name of a starre: and which vsurped name also Suetonius applieth to the selfe same thing: they bothe adding vnto it this worde Crinitus, which we also, with no lesse abuse then they, call Blasing.

An erronious opinion misked and improued.

This Blasing starre aforesaid, which appeared in the time of Augustus Cęsar, and shined so gloriously, some imagine, and suppose, to be the selfe same starre which directed the wisemen to the place where Christe was borne. But I cannot allowe of this opinion, & why I do so much mislike thereof, the reasons in the nert Chapter following, do declare. In the meane season, I would not wade in wonders aboue

my

my capacitie, least I wander in wilderneſſes of doubts, but I deſire rather to be wiſe with ſoberneſſe.

Whether the ſtarre which conducted the wiſe men to the place where Chriſt was borne, were the Blaſing ſtarre, whereof the Emperour Auguſtus did ſpeake, calling it by the name of a ſtarre.

Chap. 7.

CHriſtian duetie admoniſheth mée, in fewe wordes to make mention what maner of miraculous & ſtraunge ſtarre that was, which after a rare and wonderfull faſhion, lead the wiſe men vnto Chriſte beeing in his infancie: which ſome men, verie raſhly, & with want of aduiſement, coniecture to be the Blaſing ſtarre, which appeared and caſt a great light at the ſame time that Auguſtus Cęſar made ſhewes of greate pompe and ſolemnitie: whoſe ariſing was in the North parte of heauen, about the eleuenth houre of the day, and con-

continued (as Plinie plainely testifieth) seuen dayes space full and complete.

Of which thing, although Picus Mirandula hath both godly and grauely discourſed, yet thinke I, that it is my duetie, compendiouſly to reaſon, what in this point may be mainteined, without hurt or preiudice: and ſo much the rather, becauſe I woulde not ſeeme in this matter, to fauour the Aſtrologians, for ſomuch as they ſwarue as farre from trueth, as the worlde is wide, & the heauen is high.

Concerning the ſtarre, therefore, which appeared at Chriſt his natiuitie, the Euangeliſt, whoſe euidence is tried with the touchſtone of trueth, writeth in this wiſe. Εἴδομεν γὰρ τὸν ἀστέρα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ: Among all which wordes of this clauſe, penned by the finger of the Euangeliſt, the Latine interpreter turneth this woorde τὸν ἀστέρα, Stellam, learnedly (no doubte) & truely. The Euangeliſt yet againe ſayth thus: And, Beholde, the ſtarre which they ſawe in the Eaſt, went before them, vntill by approching, it ſtoode

For we haue ſeene his ſtarr in the Eaſt.

stoode ouer the place, where the babe was. By these testimonies, it is apparent and manifest, that neyther ἀστὴρ, nor ἄστρον, signifis a Blasing starre. Whereby the errours of Phlegon and Harpocrates are conuinced, who also deemed that the starre which shewed & shined in the East, and was the wisemens direction to Iudea, was the selfe same Blasing starre, which in the time of Augustus Cæsar (as is afore saide) so gloriously glistered: when it is as euident as the Sunne shine at noone day, howe that Blasing starre appeared manie yeres before the natiuitie of Christ, and arose in the North parte of heauen: whereas the starre which was the wisemens guid into Bethlehem, apeared in the East. Furthermore, what man would so soone be allured to beleeue, that a Blasing starre woulde be thought of the wisemen, a thing of such certeine & infallible prognostication, that the arising & proceeding thereof should embolden them to cõmence such tedious iorneys, & to attempt so many wearie labours, when they might bee of this opinion

They appeared in contrarie regions, & at sundrie times of great distance, ergo they were different starres.

opinion and iudgement as well, that the Blasing starre gaue foreknowledge of something else, besides the natiuitie and byrth of the King of the Iewes.

Wherefore it is more credible, that those wise men followed ỹ starre which then appeared, eyther vpon persuasion of the booke which Seth compiled, or els by the motion of Balaams prophesie: for that they were of the kinred and affinitie of him, as some helde opinion: or else by the ministerie of Angels, or by heauenly inspiration, or else by admonition and warning giuen in sleepe, which might (why not?) giue them vnderstanding as well of this, as it gaue them knowledge afterwards to auoyd the presence of Herod, and to returne another way into their countrie, and not the same, by which they came.

Iulianus the Apostata his opinion, as repugnant to reason & veritie, refuted.

No man is able sufficiently to declare the erronious opinion of Iulianus that irreligious reuolter, who affirmeth this starre, which he calleth by the name of Asaph, according to the opinion of the Aegyptians, of custome and wont, to appeare euery foure hundreth

dreth yeares, & that it betokeneth many things both meruellous and mortal. But tell mee thou false Prophet and peruerse Apostata, if thou wilt haue thine opinion carie away countenance of credit, How commeth it to passe, that those wise men neuer atteined to the vnderstanding of that starre, and the determinate arising of the same at a definite and appointed time, but that they then came to the intelligence thereof, when it was within the contemplation and viewe of their eyes? Howe commeth it to passe, that the appearaunce thereof was so farre from horrour and mortalitie, that it gaue præsignificatiõ of ioy, that to them was borne the King of the Iewes? And if it be effectuall to worke wonders, & to compasse strange and prodigious euentes, why then did it not euery foure hundreth yeares, by succession, season and degrées of time, prognosticate some semblable thing, like vnto that which was communicated to the knowledge of the wise men? Why did it not, after a thousande, fiue hundreth and thirtie yeares, or within

the compaſſe & reuolution of that time, bꝛing foꝛth a newe King to the woꝛld, oꝛ ſome other rare and wonderfull effect, to kindle in the hearts of men, manifeſt admiration? Dꝛ elſe, if it ſuffered an Eclipſe oꝛ depꝛiuation, of that ſingular qualitie, and ſo became dꝛie, barren, and vnfruitefull, why did it not appeare ſtill, though weakened in woꝛking, but loſt vtterly and foꝛ euer appearaunce in the heauens?

A concluſion of reaſoning interlaced with a ſhorte and ſharpe reprehenſion.

Thou ſwarueſt therefoꝛe and wandereſt farre and wide from the ſincere trueth, and giueſt a witneſſe of thy pertinacie to all people, and of thy foule impietie towardes God, in that thine owne opiniõ, which is mꝛere erronious, ſeemeth vnto thee paſſing plauſible: then in the meane ſeaſon derogating from Chꝛiſtian religion due reuerence, and ſtruggling with toth and nayle to make it contemptible. But all in vaine thou wreſtleſt with the waues, which in the ende will ouerwhelme thee in thy wilfulneſſe. Foꝛ, the trueth giueth in a contrarie verdict, againſt thee, with the which whoſoeuer haue armed theſelues to

to encounter, their successe hath not been prosperous, because they attempted combate with a mightier then themselues, and being ouermatched were carried into captiuitie, and cast into confusion. This starre therefore, which the wisemen sawe, was no Comet or Blasing starr, as diuerse haue dreamed, but some new starre, which of purpose was appointed to expresse the prouidence of the Almightie, as in the Gospel it is apparent: not being of the number & host of them, wherewith God garnished the firmament in the vniuersall creation, but differing from all starrs, both fixed, wandering, & blasing: which to be true, this testimonie affordeth authoritie: for that there be some which are of this iudgement, and holde it for a veritie, That in this starre, as in a glasse, was included the likenes of a child: into which opinion they might (peraduenture) bee induced, by the words of the wisemen, saying: Behold we haue seene his starre in the East.

The authors iudgement in the windeing vp of this controuersie.

It could not chose then, but be a new starre, & a starre importing a miracle:

for so much, as neyther the selfe same, nor any like vnto it, euer appeared in the former ages, nor at any time shined in the skies, for the space of a thousand, fiue hundreth, and thirtie yeares, after the nativitie of our comfortable Sauiour: being, I say, a starre by the grace of God created, for the execution of his message, whose pleasure being accomplished, it consumed, vanished, and was no longer obiect to the eyesight of men, being causall and temporall, not naturall and continuall.

But of this discourse sufficient is said as well for the improuing of vnsauourie opinions, as also for the discouering of the infallible trueth, requireable in this present purpose. Now will I make a retrogradation, and returne to mine argumente concerning Comets or Blasing starrs, hauing thought my penne not vnfruitefully occupied in this last particular.

Whether blasing starres preport and foreshewe some straunge and wonderfull thing to followe, Chap. 8.

It

A doctrine generall.

IT is called in controuersie, whether Cometes, commonly termed Blasing starres, portende any prodigious thing and woorldes wonder. Some in this behalfe, seeme to be resolued, and make their aunswer in this sorte: That as blasing starres are rare and seldome, so they signifie some thing ẏ is rare and straunge: vnto whiche opinion they cleaue, being therevnto drawen partly by daily experience, and partely also lead by the causes from the whiche they fett their originall.

Blasing starrs are signes of some strange thing to come

And, to say the plaine trueth, when haue Blasing stars cast their glimmering beames, and lightened the aire with their glistering brightnesse, but something hath followed, contrarie to common course, and farre otherwise then by vsuall and accustomed order is receiued: Why then should not Blasing starres as they are rare, so inferre and drawe with them rare effects: And why shoulde we otherwise thinke, then that by their generation also, some straunge thing is signified: seeing that other starrs shining in the firmament,

are thought, not only to haue bene created for the seruice of men, but also for the distinguishing of times & seasons, of dayes, houres, monethes and yeares, and for other ends also, which are priuy only to Gods secret counsel: Specially, for that our Lord Iesus, iudged not the superstitious Pharises (notwithstanding his sore denunciations of woes against them) altogether deseruing reprehension: nor vtterly blamed ỳ Sadducees, for their diligent obseruation of the weather, and marking the face of the firmament, giuing iudgement: that if the helue of heauen were such & suche, then semblable to be the sorces of ỳ seasons: as if it were couered with redd cloudes in the euening, that then men should be in expectation of the nert dayes bright clearenes. Which ceremonie of theirs, purchased in processe of time, such credit and beliefe, that it grewe into a common and familiar prouerbe.

The Phariseis and Sadduceis not altogether condemned for their due & precise obseruation of the weather.

What man can say of certentie?
The euening this doth signifie.

The good and euil which Blasing starrs do

do prognosticate & betoken. Cap. 9.

AS it is receiued for an vndoubted trueth, that Comets carrie with thē a prognosticatiō of some strange wonder: so on the other side, it hath bene precisely noted, & by due obseruation confirmed, ỹ they threaten some imminent euill and mischiefe. For which consideration, a Blasing starre was called a signe of horror, or a token of great feare, by which name excellent men, authors (I meane) or writers of singular learning & iudgement haue termed it: not that the Blasing star is to be feared, as if it could doe harme vnto man: but because the omnipotent God, & guide of the heauenly hoaste, by the same, as by a burning beacon, giueth vs warnings and watchwords of afterclappes & punishment: and to assure vs, that he it is, and none besides him, that is vniuersally to be feared, not with a seruile, but with a filiall feare: consideringe that hee hath peremptorie power ouer the whole manne, bodie and soule, vppon whiche partes he consisteth: and is of

A blasing star is a token of great feare, & a signe of horror.

abilitie to adiudge vs to temporall chastisement for our amendment: or else to condemne vs to eternall destruction, as instruments of reprobation.

But to returne to the prognostications of Cometes or Blasing starres, it is found by authoritie, that in the time of Charles the Emperour, surnamed, The great, a Blasing starre appeared, in the contemplation whereof the Emperour hauing his eyes earnestly bent, & considering profoundly thereupon, at length he was rapt into a great astonishment, touching the signification of the same: and sending for a Philosopher, named Egnard, conferred and reasoned to & fro with him about this starre, saying in conclusion, that the appearing thereof did threaten vnto him some miserable calamitie: which words the Philosopher hearing, to the intent that the Emperour shoulde not be more amased then nede required, rehearsed the saying of the Prophet in these words: *A Signis cœli nolite metuere*: Feare ye not the signes of Heauen, and let not the visions of the firmament strike ter-

A Blasing starre in the time of Carolus Magnus.

rour

rour into your heartes. Which sentence the Emperour not misliking, gaue him thankes for that comfortable counsell, saying, that hee remembred the duetie of a christian man to be this, namely to stand in feare of nothing, but only of him, who both created vs and also this starre. Which notable speache of so famous an Emperour, giueth a sensible instruction, why a Blasing starre may be called a token of terrour, or a signe of horrible feare.

Plinie also (many yeares past) affirmed, a Comet to be a terrible starre, & so inclined to destruction, that it deserued to be called mortall: as in the ciuil commotion, which was in the time of Octauius his Consulshippe: and also in the warre betweene Pompeius and Cæsar, many probabilitis are to be gathered, or rather, many verities to be aduouched. To the wordes of whiche Plinie, Vergil (the prince of all Poets and Plinies predecessour) alludeth, in this wise.

A Blasing starre threateneth destruction.

More flashing flames of lightnings cleare,
From clouds shine not beelowe:

Of Blasing starres

Nor blasing starrs, whose burning beames,
Some fatall fall doth showe. &c.

And the same Poet, in another place inserteth these wordes:

Strange stars did shine from skies in darksom (night
And flakes of fire did fil the ayre with light
A blasing star with siluered straks did shine,
And made mens harts for fear away to pine

Whome the Poet Lucanus imitating, and setting before him, as a president, for the obseruation of order, vseth these tearmes and phrases of speach in his Poemes:

Not blasing starr with glimmering strakes of (light
And lengthned haires of color red & white,
Which brings to men (as many make report)
Destruction dire in lamentable sorte.

Whereby it is to be gathered, that those kinde of writers were not ignorant, that a Comet or Blasing starr, did moste commonly presignifie and foreshew some imminent mischiefe, which in tract of time came to passe, and therupon grewe in vse to be called, A terrible or fearefull starre.

¶ The mischiefe whiche Blasing starres forewarne to insue. Cap. 10.

For

A doctrine generall.

FOrsomuch as it is declared alreadie, that Blasing starres alwayes signifie nothing else, then the approching of some pernicious and mischiefous thing likely after to insue: it remaineth, that this question be demanded, What maner of euills they be, whereof Blasing starres are premonstrations, and foretokens? Whereunto I make this aunswere, That as Blasing starres are diuerse, so are their effectes & euils which they signifie, not all one, but sundrie & differing: and forsomuch as the varietie or diuersitie of them is to be considered, therefore it is necessarie that the effects whiche followe such causes, be accordingly coniectured.

Some holde opinion, that it is to be marked, whiche way Blasing starres shoot their light, because (say they) that part of y earth seemeth to be threatened, towardes which the Comet casteth his beames thickest & most directly. Againe, it is to be noted, from what starre they receiue their force, & whence proceedeth their influence, what thinges they resemble, and represent in likenesse, and in what places they appeare.

The obseruation vsed of some at the appearing of Blasing starres

Further-

Of Blasing starres

The effectes which haue followed Blasing starres, proued true by experience

Furthermore, to touche the effectes of Blasing starres, experiences manifolde and innumerable haue sealed this for a trueth, that sometimes they signifie barrennesse of the earth, sometimes the sickenesse of the plague & pestilence, sometimes dearth, and scarsitie of victuals, sometimes great windes & tempestes, sometimes extreme heate, sometimes earthquakes, sometimes the flowing of waters beyond their boundes & bankes, to the drowning and losse of the lande, sometimes seditions, insurrections, cruell commotions, tumultes, & battels, sometimes chaunge of Kings and Kingdomes, alterations of Common wealthes, and such slaughters as seldome are sene, with many mo calamities, infinite and innumerable: in so much that Lucanus the Poet thought it no matter of doubt, but of assured certeintie, to call a Blasing starre, such a starre, as changed ỹ state of Empires, & wrought the alteration of principalities. His verses followe in this order.

Straunge starres were seene in darkesome nights,
The heauen was on a flame:

And

A doctrine generall.

And flakes of fire like burning brands,
Sore ſightes in ſkies did frame.
The fearefull ſtarre which blaſeth bright,
And ſpreades his beames abrode,
And changeth kingdomes in the world,
In th'aire aboue abode.

Sundrie examples, and teſtimonies, declaring the diuerſe and manifolde miſchiefes, which haue followed the appearing of Blaſing ſtarres. Chap. 11.

LEaſte any man ſhoulde thinke this méere fabulous, & a verie fogerie, becauſe I haue ſayed thus muche, and that vppon the opinion and authoritie of other writers, that diuerſe Blaſing ſtarres preſignifie, and giue a forewarning of diuerſe miſchiefes & euils like to come, it ſéemeth vnto mée an enterpriſe worth my labour, to ſet downe in a fewe wordes, and the ſelfe ſame conſpiring with the true reportes of Hiſtories, the aſſertion aboue mentioned, not to bee imaginarious or feigned. Wherein it ſhall not ſéeme a matter depending vpon neceſſitie, to runne thorough all

pare

particular example, and to make a vniuersall repetition of testimonies from the worlds creation: (which passeth the capacitie of my wit to comprehend, because they exceede in multitude:) But it shall rather be sufficient, & muche more profitable, out of many to gather a fewe, and such indeede, as authors most worthie of credite haue sett downe in their workes and treatises.

A shorte enumeration or rehearsall of mischiefes which followed vpon the appering of Blasing starres.

And first of all to begin with the noblest writers, and best approued: who is ignorant, that after the appearaunce of a Comet in the time of Iulius Cæsar, not only ciuil warres followed, in maner most lamentable, but also the death & murthering of Iulius Cæsar his owne person, which was most miserable: who beeing fiue and fiftie yeeres of age, was assaulted and set vpon in a conspiracie, of three score Princes and more, among whom were C. Cassius, Marcus, and D. Brutus: and beeing gored through, and slaine with three and twentie woundes in the Court of Pompeius despitefully perished: whereof P. Virgilius, Lucanus, Plinie, Suetonius, Appianus, Plutarchus,

tarchus, and diuerse other writers of great authoritie are witnesses.

What should I linger longe in the repetition of those straunge tempestes, of snowes, hailes, inundations of waters, and other like calamities, that followed the appearing of the same Blasing starre? Whiche F. Horatius doth not nakedly describe, but singularly sette downe, with a kinde of complaint.

Who knoweth not, what an vnspeakable desolation, and wonderfull ouerthrowe of Hierusalem Citie, followed after the appearing of a certeine Blasing starre, whiche was sæne in the aire, (Iosephus and Eusebius faithfully affirming no lesse,) by the space of a whole yeare, burning with flames of lamentable destruction?

The selfe same miserable massacre and desolation followed shortely after this Blasing starre, whiche the Lorde himselfe, the Father of all mercie, and Iudge of all reuengement, did not only fortell many yeres, yer it came to passe: but also wept for very sorrow of heart,

as

as he was prophesying to Hierusalem, her sharp visitation. For our Sauiour Christe (as the Euangelists testifie) beholding the Citie, wept ouer her, & sounded as it were in her eares this sorrowfull sentence: If thou haddest knowne, (saith he) in that thy daye, those things which belonged vnto thy peace, and nowe are hidden from thine eyes &c.

A Blasing starre appeared before the death of the Emperour Constantine.

Did not the death of that most godlie and religious Emperour Constantine, followe and insue the appearing of a Blasing starre, which was sæne in the yeare of our Lord 304. being of an vnaccustomed bignesse, and of no lesse horreur to behold? And did not thereupon likewise followe an ercæding dangerous insurrection in the Empire, wherein, among many murthers and bloudsheds the Emperour Constantius was spoyled of his life, in the Castell of Helena, not farre from Spaine?

In the yeare of our Lorde 444. a Blasing starre was sæne, which as it gaue presignifications & foretokens of afterclaps, so did there insue moste miserable slaughters and calamities, specially

cially in Fraunce: & not long after Colen being assalted and besæged of the Hunnes, was ransackt, spoyled, & made euen in a maner with the ground: and ỹ most Catholique Emperour Martian, was in a conspiracie of his owne subiectes, contrarie to the religious othe of allegiance, murthered and made away at Constantinople.

A meruellous inundation of waters with other notable calamities forewarned by a Blasing starre.

After the appearing of a starre in the yeare of our Lorde, fiue hundred, foure score and foure, there followed such an inundation of waters, in euery place of the land, that it was auerred and beleæued, a seconde deluge or vniuersall floude to haue bæne prepared for the drowning of the whole worlde. After ỹ insued in Italie, so hott a pestilence, that within the compasse of a litle time, many thousandes died in maner most lamentable. Not long after that Rome tasted of the whip: for ỹ Lombards laying sæge against it, made hauocke therof out of measure. Vppon the tayle of whiche sharpe punishment, there followed a worsse: for the Sarracens rose vpp with stearne lokes and bending

browes, compelling the third part (almost) of ye world which professed Christianitie, to fall to Apostasie, and to take parte with them in their damnable sect of diuelish idolatrie, and detestable vngodlinesse.

A Blasing star appeared before the death of Carolus Magnus.

In the yeare of our Lord eight hundred and thirtéene, there was a Blasing starre séene most straunge and terrible, wherevpon insued ye death of that most Christian Emperour Carolus Magnus. The Saracens assalted Italie and with violence of sworde and warlike engine ouercame and preuailed: not without ye ruine of many a beautiful building, & sheding of much bloud.

Bloudie battelles whiche followed after the appearing of a Blasing starre.

In the yeare of our Lord a thousand two hundred foure score & foure, there appeared a Blasing starre, which did portend a manifest shewe of much mischiefe and miserie: for in the yeare of our Lorde a thousande thrée hundred & twoe next insuing, that memorable & bloudie battel of Flanders was fought, which to ye french men principally ministred occasion of many a lamentable Alas: for in that battel, the floure of the

Frenche

French armie (I meane the chiefest in place and countenaunce) & the gemme of all their glorie went to wracke, suffering deth no lesse ignominiously then tyrannically. And after that, Rodulph the Emperour, making sæge against Verona, susteined great losse of his best appointed souldiours the Switzers, whose bloud embrewed ỹ blades of their enimies, their bodies lying vppon the grounde groueling and senseleſſe: and the Emperour himself fighting against Albert duke of Austria was slaine, only Emperour elected but not crowned.

A Blasing starre shooting vpward, what afterwards insued.

Now, what manifold miseries and mischiefes, a Blasing starre which shooteth vpward, the head hanging downewarde, doth betoken, may sone be perceiued and knowne by the experience of a Blasing starre, which appeared in the West, & toke his course towarde the North, whiche starre was sœne in the yeare of our Lord a thousand thræ hundred thræ score and thræ. The woes wherof this starre gaue foreknowledge, fell vppon the Frenchemen, to their no small smart & lamentable vnluckines:

For in a foughten field against the Turkes, howbeit, out of the compasse of the French dominion, they were discomfited and ouerthrowen, a hundred thousand of them slaine with the sword, among which number was the Duke of Burgundie, who with the rest, lost his life without recouerie.

Not long after which infortunate conflict, namely in the yere of our Lord 1406, Lodouicke Duke of Clarence, and brother to the French king, was murthered at Parise moste traiterously, and fraudulently: the losse of whose life, was death and destruction to a great number.

Strang things which haue followed after the appearing of a Blasing starre.

And (that I may growe to an ende) who doeth not remember, what grieuous calamities did followe the appearing of a Blasing starr, in ỹ yere of our Lorde a thousand foure hundred three score and twelue, in the Moneth of Januarie, ouer Colen, Eastward, to the terrour of the beholders, and astonishment of the hearers? There followed hereuppon, in the Summer nexte and immediately insuing, a meruellous heate,

heate, ingendered euerie where in the earth, which was of such strength and vehemencie, that in some places, the fire brust out, and cast vp with it, euen the verie sand and grauell. Herevppon followed, not here and there, but euery where, battels and murthers, mortall maladies, loathsome sickenesses, moste noysome and infectious: yea, so horrible, that I want wit, eyther in writing to leaue them witnessed, or by vterance to make them manifest. At whiche time also, the right renowmed Charles Duke of Burgundie, passed many warrelike aduentures, and atchieued manie a Martiall exploite, to his no small commendation and increase of deserued praise, notwithstanding the successe of battell is doubtfull and dangerous.

In the yeare of our Lorde, a thousand foure hundred and eight, there appeared a Blasing starre, which as in sight it was wonderfull and terrible, so it betokened mischiefes no lesse innumerable, then eyther to heare, see, or recount is moste lamentable: For not

Further mischiefes which haue followed after Blasing starres.

many dayes after, Luyck fel, & certeine men to the number of 40. were cruelly slain. About that time also, ỹ Prussians, entring battell against the king of Poland were foyled, & a slaughter, the like not heard of, made of them in ỹ conflict. At the same time also was the Counsel holden at Pisa dissolued & ceassed, by a schisme most damnable: the cause of their conuocation & meeting being for the making and confirming of vnitie.

Leege.

Therabout also beganne the Church to be yll appaid, and to stande in hazard of hauocke: whose present assistent Sigismund the king of Hungarie shewed him selfe to be: in such sort with valiauncie of spirit, that he might meritoriously chalenge to be synamed, The most Christian king. Thus farre touching the euills, yea the heapes of euilles whiche Blasing stars haue portended, obserued by experience and triall to be true, by the euent and falling out of many misfortunes, whiche both long agoe, and also of late haue happened. It remaineth, that we knowe, whether they be not foretokens also of some

The conclusion of this Chapter.

whiche although many vtterly deny, Yet neuertheleſſe reade our further iudgement.

Whether Blaſing ſtarres doe not aſwel betoken good, as yll. Chap. 12.

HAuing before declared, by reaſons not a few, and proued alſo by examples of veritie & trueth, that Blaſing ſtarres for the moſt part are preſignificant ſhewes and tokens of ſome miſchiefe and euill: my thinkes I heare one aſking me this queſtion, Whether Blaſing ſtarres are not tokens of good, as they are ſignes of euill. To whom I make this reſolution. Firſt, ſo farre forth as Blaſing ſtarres be ſupernaturall, there ſeemeth in this matter to reſte no doubte: bicauſe almightie God, in the vnſearchable profunditie of his wiſedome, is wont by the appearing of ſtarres, to giue ſignes to his beloued ſeruauntes, whom no doubt he hath foreelected to ſaluation, well of ioyfull newes as alſo of heauie tydinges.

Blaſing ſtars ſupernaturall ſignes ſent from God.

The Rainbow is a perpetuall assurance of Gods faithfull promise.

For, hath hee not by the riseing of the Rainebowe in the cloudes of heauen, sealed securitie & want of feare to the worlde, from beeing drowned, as some times it was in the dayes of our great auncientes? Did hee not by the retrocession & backward going of the Sunne contrarie to the order of his course, signifie vnto Ezechias, that his life should be prolonged, & that the number of his dayes were augmented? Did hee not also signifie vnto all nations, that the light was come into the worlde, which should shine in darknesse, namely Iesus Christ to bee borne for the saluation of all people: which thing he woulde haue testified by the appearing of a newe Orientall starre, visible to the eyes of the wise men, & gloriously glistering? Euen so doubteles, there is no cause, why y sight of a Blasing starr should not breede in vs, as well hope of some good, as feare of some yll, according to the place and time where and when it appeareth, since it is saide: Feare not the signes of Heauen, which the Gentiles feare: beecause the lawes of the people

are

are vaine. Why then shoulde we stande in feare of those things, which haue not in them power, either to doe good or harme? Againe, so farre forth as Blasing starres are naturall, it is not to be douted, but that the appearing of them may portend and foreshewe some good: which is no hard or intricate matter to declare, as well by reason as also by example. For, in so much as Blasing starres are made of fiue Planets (as Albienus affirmeth) namely of Venus, Iupiter, Mars, Saturne, and Mercurie: and that those Blasing starrs which are made of Venus and Iupiter are principally the best and luckiest, it cannot otherwise be, but that Blasing starres, those specially whiche haue their influence from Venus and Iupiter, shoulde sometimes betoken good, and not euermore yll. An example of good credit may that Blasing starre be, which when it appeared, was iudged so happie & fortunate to the Emperour Cæsar Augustus, that then it was begunne to bee worshipped in the temple at Rome, and no where else throughout the whole

Blasing starres naturall may betoken some good.

world: because the Emperour beegin-
ning those shewes and pageants triun-
phant, was by the appearing of that
starre of seuen dayes continuance in the
region of heauen, putt in hope and ex-
pectation before hand of exceding great
felicitie and happinesse to insue: which
vndoubtedly he obteined in such sorte
and manner, that none in regiment
was counted happier then happie Au-
gustus, as none was named better then
the good Traianus.

The vanitie or superstition of the igno-rant people & grossehed-ed multitude.

Moreouer, vppon the appearing of
that starre, there bredde in the mindes
of the Cõmonaltie an opinion of great
reuerence, to witt, that by the Blasing
starre was signified, the soule of Cęsar
to be receiued to immortalitie, and to
enioy among the Gods aboundance of
blessednesse: then which signification,
they beleeued nothing more ioyfull or
comfortable. So that we see both by re-
son and example, that their coniecture
and opinion doeth not always deserue
beleefe, which say, that Blasing starres
neuer appeare, but therafter followeth
some mischefe and yl. Touching which
matter,

matter, more might be saide to the increase of comfort, and the driuing away of despaire from the harts of the people, then we are disposed at this time to cal to memorie.

To what countries and to what persons Blasing starres do principally beetokenyll. Chap. 13.

THe question is asked, To what countries, and to what people specially, Blasing starrs threaten mischefe. Unto which demaunde doubtlesse, I might thinke no certeine aunswere can bee made: because all Blasing starres are not alike, eyther haue their generation from one and the selfe same cause: but some of them are naturall, othersome supernaturall, & proceeding from God in the height of the heauens.

Againe, they are without difference so doubtfull in their significations, that Lucanus supposeth their influence to be so generall, that the beholders of them, eyther on Sea or Land, cannot assure them selues of safetie: and therefore they are vniuersally to be feared.

Blasing starsare vniuersally tobe feared both on sea and land.

Unto

world: because the Emperour beegin-ning those shewes and pageants triumphant, was by the appearing of that starre of seuen dayes continuance in the region of heauen, putt in hope and expectation before hand of exceding great felicitie and happinesse to insue: which vndoubtedly he obteined in such sorte and manner, that none in regiment was counted happier then happie Augustus, as none was named better then the good Traianus.

The vanitie or superstition of the ignorant people & grosseheded multitude.

Moreouer, vppon the appearing of that starre, there bredde in the mindes of the Cõmonaltie an opinion of great reuerence, to witt, that by the Blasing starre was signified, the soule of Cęsar to be receiued to immortalitie, and to enioy among the Gods aboundance of blessednesse: then which signification, they beleeued nothing more ioyfull or comfortable. So that we sée both by reason and example, that their coniecture and opinion doeth not always deserue beleefe, which say, that Blasing starres neuer appeare, but therafter followeth some mischefe and yl. Touching which matter,

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Vnto

Unto whose opinion I willingly assent, when Blasing starres supernaturall and proceeding from God doe appeare. For this is of a certeintie, that it is Gods will, by them to betoken and threaten somewhll, to all persons in generall, which hauing offended and done wickedly against the prescript of his holie lawe, withdrawe not themselues from that puddle of pollution and filthinesse, wherein they wallowe, but continue a life laden & ouercharged with all manner of mischefe: whom he of his singular compassion and clemencie, would reuoke from their sinfulnesse, by the vision and sight of Blasing starres, as it were by horrible threateninges & rebokements, that by reformming their abhominable liues, they might frame their conuersation acceptable in his sight, according to his vnspeakable bountifulnesse, long suffering, & patience, who still loketh for repentance before he taketh vengeance. As may manifestly be gathered, by his dealing wt the Hierosolimites, whom he admonished of their wickednes, by a most horrible

rible Blasing starr of a whole yeres appearing, daily loking when they would be warned, & well appoynted with penitence to preuent Gods sharp punishment.

But touching naturall Blasing starres, Philosophers & Astronomers haue otherwise indged: howebeit, neither they shall at any time appeare without the singular sufferance of God, or some notable cause worthie remembrance. For my selfe thus I say, that as I am not of beleefe that they betoken & proue in working as ỹ Astrologians dreame: So I do not vtterly condemne such as holde it much materiall and greatly to be regarded, towarde what parte of the worlde they shote & cast their beames, from what starres they drawe their influencies and force, in what similitude and likenesse they appeare, what colour they carrie, at what season of the yeare they shewe, in what place, vnder what celestiall signes, and vnder what Planets aspect. For some there are, which holde this opinion, though grounded vppon no kinde of reason, that a Bla-

Blasing starres naturall appeare at Gods appointment.

a Blasing starre, bearing the likenesse of a Lute, Harpe, or semblable instrument, betokeneth somwhat to Musicke and minstrelsie, and to the followers of such vanities. So likewise, when they carrie this representation or that, to haue in their likenesses semblant significations.

The colour of Blasing starrs appearing vnder Planets.

Againe, other are of this iudgment, that such blasing starrs as appeare vnder Saturne, are of a leaden colour: vnder Iupiter, white: vnder Mars, redde: vnder Sol, Golden: vnder Mercurie, light azure: whereuppon it is thought no hard matter, to tell what they signifie in nature generally: Howbeit, to persons placed in dignitie, as to Popes, Cardinalles, Bishoppes, Emperours, Kings, Dukes, and suche like as are of place & countenaunce in the Common wealth, they foreshewe some euill: wherin as I holde it reuerence to be silent: so were it ouermuch boldnesse & presumption to be medling. What therefore may bee saide in this point, let Astronomers shewe their cunning.

The modestie and circumspection of the authour.

Howe

A doctrine generall.

How and what way blasing starres are forewarnings of somewhat to come, and of force so to doe. Chap. 14.

ALthough it may seeme diuersely and many wayes probable, that blasing starres foreshewe somewhat to insue: yet notwithstanding it is not necessarie that we should beleeue (as the Astrologians rashely holde opinion) that they can be signes or tokens of that thing, whereof they are no cause. For a Blasing starre cannot be eyther the cause, or the effect of warre or death, albeit, it prognosticate & foreshewe as a signe from a naturall cause, both the one & the other.

It may bee (I will not denie) the cause after a sort: as if that which is the cause of warre and Pestilence, we suppose also to bee the cause of the Blasing starre.

Blasing stars are after a sort the cause of warr, pestilence, &c.

As when aboundaunce of vapoures are drawen vpp into the aire, whiche being kindeled and sett on fire, there followeth and insueth the generation of a Blasing starre, & infection of the aire

aire, whiche breedeth plague and pestilence, mouing mens mindes to mutinies, through the increase and plentie of choler stirred vpp in them: whereby they runne with main force to harnesse and weapon, and so to battell & bloudshed, not feeling in them any rule of reason restraining them in this their rashnesse. Herevpon (as it is not vnlike) spring commotions in kingdomes, and mutations of Common wealthes, then destruction: for, A realme diuided within it selfe, beeing vnable long to laste, must needes come to losse.

Blasing starres forerokens of barrennesse.

Furthermore, seeing that the generation of a naturall Blasing starre, importeth that in some place hath beene great heate and drought, (for other wise such store of matter as is required towards the ingendering thereof, could not be drawen vp:) it is woont to come to passe, that Blasing starres doe commonly threaten barrennesse to Sandie and not to Fennie countries.

Now, because it is likewise knowen, that by the force of starres, many enuenomed and infectious vapours ascend,

it

Blasing starr foretokens of pestilence and mortalitie.

It seemeth credible that a Blasing starr is a forewarning of a following pestilence, ingendered through the aire beeing choked and poysoned by vapours of suche qualitie. By whiche meanes in like maner, drought setteth mens hearts on fire, and driueth them forwarde to fall at strife, bralling, battell and bloudshed, it troubleth the braine, estrangeth the senses, and thus arise seditions. To conclude with the purpose, it is not greatly necessarie in this declaration, to vse longer delay, since I am of this beleefe, ỹ God of the aboundaunce of his loue towards vs, which is vnmesurable, by nature as a meane or meete instrumente, causeth suche and such Blasing starres to appeare: to the intent that he might by them as by premonishments and forewarninges, put vs in mind to remember, that it is time to start from sinne, & to prepare our heartes with repentaunce, for the preuenting of these sharpe and smarting whips of Gods vengeaunce, which by suche Blasing starres, at Gods commaundement, are threatened. For he

neuer, or very seldome, since the creation of the world plagued any people, but he sent among them some signe thereof, for their preparation to penitence, as in holie scriptures it is at large declared.

¶ Why blasing starres doe specially betoken yll to Peeres, Potentates, Rulers of realmes and commonwealthes, &c

Chap. 15.

IT is the opinion of some, though erronious, that Blasing stars doe specially betoken yl to Princes and great men, and to their kingdomes also and Realmes threaten some mischiefe: in such wise, that it hath bæne obserued & marked, that no Blasing starre almoste hath appeared, but either death or else some yll hath hapened after, to some noble personage in ỹ land: as by our former examples it is left verified: which made Lucane the Poet to write of them, in this wise.

A Blasing starre in sight most straunge,

The

A doctrine generall.

The ſtate of kingdomes, which doth change.

But it is hœre demaunded, what the cauſe ſhould bœ, that Blaſing ſtarres doe ſpecially betoken yll to Emperours, Kinges, and ſuch like noble perſonages? I anſwere, that there is none other cauſe, as they ſuppoſe, ſo farre forthe as Blaſing ſtarres bœ naturall, then becauſe ſuche great eſtates and Pœres of Realmes, liuing more delicately and vntemperately then other, are ſoner ſubiecte and ſurpriſed with corrupt and empoyſoned aire: and ſo they carrying cloſe within them, and ſecretly nouriſhing the cauſe of yll in them ſelues, bœing vnpatient and not able to indure the working of medicinable receiptes, quickly periſh and miſcarrie.

Why Blaſing ſtarres beetoken yll to peeres and potentates &c.

But ſo farre forth as Blaſing ſtarrs are ſupernaturall, and as they haue their procœding and bœing from the omnipotent GOD, it is thought this to be the cauſe: namely, that GOD is preparing a plage againſt them, that the blacke tentes of his indignation are

Blaſing ſtarrs ſupernaturall are immediat forewarnings from God.

a pitching, that the weapons of his vengeaunce are whetted against them, whereof he giueth forewarnings, like a most mercifull father: to the end they might vnderstand, that the cause of this Gods iust dealing, (being sinne and wickednes,) is either in Princes themselues, or else in the people vnder their vngratious gouernement: in consideration whereof, as well Prince as people might see the horrour and abhomination of their owne sinnefull liues, and flee to repentance, whervnto God so fatherly would winne them by forewarninges: that according to the example of that holie King, they might lift vp both hearts and handes to heauen, saying. Enough nowe Lord, stay thy hande. It is I that haue offended: it is I that haue don wickedly: as for these innocent sheepe, what harme haue they done? Furthermore, to whome doth a Blasing starre betoken somewhat to follow, if not to the King? For in that it signifieth somewhat to the realme, it must extend euen to the person of the King, who hath y rule & gouernment of that

The wickednesse of the people is imputed to the prince.

that realme: bicause he is a king, by his kingdom, & bicause the wickednesse of the kingdome, is reputed the wickednesse of the king, who either by his insample giueth occasion of wickednesse: or else hauing power and authoritie to suppresse sinne in the people, neglecteth notwithstanding ỹ due execution and administration of iustice: so that the saying of the Apostle is most certeine & vndoubted, that: All those whom God hath placed in authoritie, and giuen præminence vnto, are tyed to the necessitie of this heauie reckoning, not onely to stande accountable to almightie God for their owne, but also for the soules of all such ouer whom they haue charge. And therefore right aptly spake that moste wise and worthie king Dauid to all kinges, (and vnder their title, to all suche as excell other in office and dignitie:) And nowe ye kinges (saieth he) vnderstande, bee ye learned which iudge the earth, serue the Lord with feare, &c.

A heauie reckoning, for such as are in authoritie & office.

And thus farre touching this matter, whiche though it be but bluntly

and shortly deliuered, yet is it to bs marked.

¶ Of a certeine Blasing star which appeared in the yeare of our Lord, a thousande fiue hundred thirtie one, the nineteenth of Septemb. at Mentz, a citie in Germanie, and was sensibly seene likewise in other places.

Chap. 16.

A question is asked, what that Blasing starre, which was seene in the yeare of our Lord, 1531. might signifie, and to whome it is a foretoken of some euill to insue? In aunswering whereunto, I would to God I might not tell the truth so directly, as I did of an earthquake 3. yeares past, the effects where, of ỹ citie of Mentz, not without trembling tasted. The Blasing starre therefore which appeared An. 1531. betokenes a heauie burthen of vengeaunce, not onely to the state temporal, but also ecclesiasticall: yea it threateneth a plague to the whole worlde. The fashion and likenesse thereof signifieth no lesse, for it was to see to, in forme of a brome, or a bundell of rodds. Which figure of a rodde

A Blasing starre betokeneth vengeaunce from God.

rodde, we doubte, forewarneth vs of that rodde, whereof the Lorde speaketh by the Prophet: I wil visite their iniquities with the rodde, and their sinnes with stripes. For Almightie God vseth for more certeintie of forewarning, to giue vnto signes and tokens, the likenesses of things signified and betokened. As for example.

At what time his will was to forewarne the Iewes of the Babylonicall captiuitie or bondage, hee spake thus to Ieremie ỹ Prophet: Make thee fetters & chayns, & put them about thy necke, &c. Therby to signifie their captiuitie. So the same God, gaue a signe in the aire, of Titus & Vespasianus his huge hoast against Ierusalem, to lay it waste: armed men with speares and launces running to and fro in warrelike wise which though they sawe manifestly, yet ceast they not to liue as they were wont, most wickedly: the vengeaunce of God falling vppon them, which by those forewarnings was prophesied.

Forewarnings by signes bearing resemblance of things signified.

A strãge sight and wonderful a forewarning of a bloudie battel.

In the yeare of our Lorde a thousande fiue hundred, there were seene

falling from Heauen vpon mens garments, crosses, and there appeared in sensible maner, as certeine signs what shoulde after come to passe: namely, that bloudie battell betwéene the two worthy Princes, Rupert the thirde sonne of Philip, Palsegraue of Rhene and prince Electour: & the noble prince Albert duke of Bauaria: the ensignes of the one hauing black crosses, and the other redd: so that in the yeare a thousand fiue hundred & foure was fulfilled that, which in the yeare a thousand fiue hundred was foretolde.

Wherefore, it is to bee feared, least the Blasing starre, which was séene in the likenesse of a rodde, threaten vnto vs that rodde, which the Prophet spake of, wherewith God is purposed in iustice to visite the wickednesse of the people. For, if this Blasing starre be naturall, wee shall perceiue nothing in it, which betokeneth not some greate euil.

All mischiefe commeth from the North.

First, because it blased so éuen from the West to the North, from whence (as witnesseth the Prophet) all mischiefe doeth precéede, hauing neuertheles

lesse an aspect into other quarters of the worlde, terrible and threatening enough.

It was variable in colour, somtimes pale, that is Leaden and Saturnine, sometimes redde and Martiall. Moreouer, in so much as it continued (by the auerrement of Astronomers) vnder Saturne and Mars, Planets and signes of vnluckie influence, it seemeth to betoken not onely vnto one or two countries, but to the whole worlde, famine, warre, and pestilence: for it blased most terribly into all partes of the worlde.

Furthermore, if the same Blasing starre were supernaturall, and immediate from God, contrarie to the course & order of Nature, it might not otherwise be thought, but that it betokened to the worlde much miserie & woe: for God thereby signified, that his vengeaunce was to come vppon all wicked worldlings, and vpon all such persons, as to their impenitence ioyne continuance in sinne.

Nowe, who hath the face to say a-

The horrible sin & wickednesse of the world prouoketh God to plague and punish with sharpnesse.

gainst this, that the worlde hath taken such a surfette in iniquitie, & is become so dronken in all abhomination, that Gods mercie is changed into iudgment and his patience into punishment, his loue into wrath, and his kindnesse into furie? In suche wise, that it may be supposed, God to speake vnto vs by this Blasing starr, as it were out of a cloud, in this maner: (The end of all fleshe is beefore mee. The earth is filled full of their iniquitie, and I will sweepe them away from the face of the earth. For they haue all plaid the startbacks, they haue walked in the byways of wickednesse, and are become vnprofitable: in so much that there is none that doeth good, no not one.) Which as none can denie, so I thinke none dares but thus confesse, that the Blasing starre sæne in our Horizon, betokeneth a common calamitie, considering howe iniquitie doth abound in all places, & that sinne is grown to a perfect maturitie & ripenesse: which God of his mercie giue vs grace to amende, that wee fæle not the heate of his consuming anger, whereof

A supposed speache of God expressing his wrath conceiued for iniquitie.

he

hee hath ſent vs a forewarning.

¶Whether ſuche euilles as Blaſing ſtarres betoken, may by any meanes either be preuented or auoyded.

Chap. 17.

IT remaineth, (moſt puiſſaunt Emperour) the premiſſes conſidered, yt your maieſtie taking the king of Niniuie for an enſample, riſe from your ſeat of royaltie, and putting on ſackcloth together with vs your people, lift vp our hands and heartes to heauen, like moſt humble ſuters, ſaying with king Manaſſes in effecte as followeth.

O almightie Lorde and God, whoſe workemanſhippe is the whole worlde, the heauen and the earth, with all the beautie and bleſſings of the ſame, at the preſence of whoſe power all thinges quake and tremble, whoſe indignation when it threatneth vengeance vnto ſinners, is vnſufferable: and whoſe promiſes of mercie are vnmeaſurable: becauſe thou arte euen the moſte highe Lord

The meanes to preuent & auoide the euils which Blaſing ſtarres foreſhew, is to pray, repent and amend &c.

Lord ouer all the earth, full of patience, forbearaunce, pittie, and repentaunce ouer the wickednesse of sinfull people: delaying the sharpenesse of thy iudgements, for their amendement, and deliueraunce from punishment. Thou, ô Lord, hast promised according to thy bottomlesse bountie and goodnesse, a penitent Spirite, not to iust and righteous Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, whiche haue not offended against thy Maiestie: but to those that are ouerwhelmed with the tempestuos tydes of their transgressions.

Wee (ô Lorde) haue offended, and our fathers haue cõmitted sinne in thy sight: We haue defiled our selues in the puddle of iniquitie: and therefore wee bow before thee the knees of our hearts, beseeching thee to be gratious vnto vs, and to open thine eares to our prayers. We haue sinned (ô Lord) we haue sinned, & we acknowledge our misdeedes, humbly beseeching thee to forgiue vs our offences. O forgiue vs, and deliuer vs not ouer to destruction with our iniquities: neyther lay thou vp in store

vengeaunce

vengeance againſt the day of iudgemẽt. O reſerue not for vs the whip of woe & wretchedneſſe: but in mercie pardon our miſdeedes, and let not the fire of thy furie and wrath waxe hot againſt vs, to conſume vs in our iniquitie, &c.

Now, who is ſo blunt of iudgment, and dull of vnderſtanding, that ſeeth not this confeſſion of offences, this repentaunce & contrition of heart, this humbling and ſubmitting our ſelues both in ſoule & bodie vnder the mightie hand of the omnipotent God, will pacifie and aſſuage the fierceneſſe of his furie, & ſo ſpare vs in compaſſion, through vnfeigned repentaunce, that we periſhe not as outcaſtes from his fauour?

Why ſhould we not haue this hope and confidence in God, conſidering, that to ỳ penitent Niniuites he did not ſhutt the gates of his compaſſion, but ſæing their conuerſion and forſaking of ſinne, with the denyall of themſelues & all goodneſſe in them, he receiued them againe to mercie, from which by their ſinnes they were before excluded.

God doeth not exclude the penitent from the throne of grace, but receiueth them to his mercie.

Furthermore, it is not nædfull that

Blasing starr, nor other signes appearing in the heauen, are hurtful to any without the permission of God.

we stand in feare of the celestial signes: because without God they haue no power at all to preuaile against any people: but beeing his seruaunts are at his commaundement, from whome all starres and all creatures haue their office and ministerie. To conceiue terror and feare therefore at the appearing of a Blasing starre, as betokening some euil like to followe, it is extreame madnesse: let vs rather tremble at his almightinesse, and feare the consuming flames of his iustice, who is the creator and maker not only of Blasing starres, but also of the Sunne, Moone, and Planets, yea of reasonable man.

And let vs not thinke, but that God, who framed the whole worlde, the heauen aboue, and the earth belowe, is able as he made them, so to rule them: for at his commaundement are all things within the compasse of the Heauen, bee they starres, or what soeuer else: so that he can, according to the greatnesse of his power, which filleth all places, chaunge and dispose them, after his owne pleasure: yea the threatening tokens of his iudgment & vengeaunce, will he turne

into forberance and forgiuenesse, if we penitently neglect not (as did the Iewes) the time of our visitation. For they beeing warned by many wonders, and among others, by a Blasing starr of no lesse horrour then continuaunce, lay slugging in the couche of securitie and carelessenesse: and not regarding the threates of God for sinne, either of wilfull blindenesse, or stoute stubbernesse, coũted those tokens of Gods vnsufferable wrath, elementarie apparitions & toyes mære contemptible.

To neglecte the time of our visitation hasteneth Gods heauie and sharp punishment.

But let not vs suffer our selues to be lulled a sleepe in the cradle of sensualitie: let vs not be droncken with the dregges of their abhomination: let not the vanities of our owne heartes so bewitch vs, that we fall into a selfe loue & lyking of our owne selues, neglecting the profered time of grace and louing kindenesse, lest God deliuering vs ouer to reprobation in his vnappeasseable displeasure, plague vs with ẏ same rod of reuengment for our vngratiousnesse, wherwith he toke vengeance vpon them for their wilfull stubbernesse.

It is good to be warned by the example of others.

Which

Which, that it may not come to passe, let vs in time turne to the Lorde, and in due seson take his fatherly admonitions, as readie meanes to leade vs to repentance, & the auoyding of ỹ scourge of destruction, wherewith he punisheth the impenitent. From the whiche deliuer vs O Lorde God.

To the Allmightie, Euerlasting, Inuisible, and Onely wise GOD, before All, aboue All, & in All, be all Laude, Honour, Glorie, Dominion and Maiestie for euer & euer. Amen.

(.·.)

FINIS.